

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W

-----061555Z 050026 /47

O P 061429Z MAY 77

FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 431

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY NICOSIA PRIORITY

USMISSION NATO PRIORITY

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EXDIS

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR GR US

SUBJECT: BRIEF SUMMARY OF MAY 6 DISCUSSION WITH FORMIN BITSIOS

REF: ATHENS 4214

1. IN ADDITION TO MY DISCUSSION THIS MORNING WITH BITSIOS OF THE UPCOMING LONDON MEETINGS (REFTEL), WE ALSO TOUCHED BRIEFLY ON SEVERAL OTHER TOPICS.

2. STRASBOURG MEETING WITH CAGLAYANGIL. BITSIOS DID NOT ATTACH MUCH IMPORTANCE TO THIS LATEST BILATERAL MEETING WITH CAGLAYANGIL (UNLIKE HIS STAFF -- SEE ATHENS 4218). HE SAID IT WAS ANOTHER OF THEIR PERIODIC ATTEMPTS TO CLEAR THE AIR IN ORDER TO PROCEED WITH CONTACTS AND NEGOTIATIONS AT OTHER LEVELS TO RESOLVE THE CONTINENTAL SHELF AND AIRSPACE DISPUTES IN THE AEGEAN. CAGLAYANGIL HAD RESTATED HOW HE THOUGHT THE DISCUSSIONS AND NEGOTIATIONS SHOULD PROCEED, AND SO HAD BITSIOS. IT BECAME CLEAR TO BITSIOS THAT NOTHING REALLY SIGNIFICANT WAS GOING TO HAPPEN IN THESE NEGOTIATIONS, AS

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FAR AS THE TURKISH SIDE WAS CONCERNED, UNTIL AFTER THE TURKISH ELECTIONS NEXT MONTH. EVEN SO, CAGLAYANGIL HAD WANTED BADLY TO RESUME THE BILATERAL DISCUSSIONS ON THE CONTINENTAL SHELF ISSUE BEFORE THE ELECTIONS AND, IF POSSIBLE, BEFORE THE END OF MAY. THEREFORE, TO BE ACCOMMODATING, BITSIOS HAD AGREED TO SEND TZOUNIS AND THE GREEK DELEGATION TO SUCH A MEETING BEFORE THE

END OF THIS MONTH; BUT HE REALLY DID NOT EXPECT MUCH TO HAPPEN THERE.

3. CYPRUS. BITSIOS SEEMED TO BE GENERALLY AWARE OF THE EFFORTS WE HAD MADE TO MAINTAIN THE TALKS IN NICOSIA THIS MONTH. HERE AGAIN, HOWEVER, HE HAD GATHERED FROM CAGLAYANGIL THAT NO REAL PROGRESS ON THE SUBSTANCE OF THE ISSUES COULD BE EXPECTED UNTIL AFTER THE SCHEDULED JUNE 5TH ELECTIONS. HE SAID CAGLAYANGIL HAD TOLD HIM THAT THE PROBLEM BASICALLY WAS ECEVIT, WHO CONSIDERED AND PORTRAYED HIMSELF IN TURKEY AS THE "VICTOR" ON CYPRUS AND COULD BE EXPECTED TO REAP IMPORTANT POLITICAL ADVANTAGE FROM ANY PRE-ELECTION INDICATIONS THAT THE DEMIREL GOVT WAS GIVING UP POSITIONS ON CYPRUS "WON WITH TURKISH BLOOD."

4. DCA DISCUSSIONS. BITSIOS SAID HE WAS WELL SATISFIED WITH THE PROGRESS THAT HAD BEEN MADE IN OUR DEFENSE COOPERATION DISCUSSIONS. HE SAID HE EXPECTED THEM TO BE FINISHED SOON AND ASKED IF I WAS AWARE OF TZOUNIS' TALK LAST NIGHT WITH DCM MILLS (SEPTEL). I SAID I WAS AND THAT I SIMPLY WAS NOT IN A POSITION THIS MORNING TO COMMENT FURTHER, THAT THESE WERE MATTERS THAT HAD TO BE REFERRED TO WASHINGTON FOR CONSIDERATION AND DECISION. BITSIOS SAID THAT HE AND CARAMANLIS WERE TAKING TZOUNIS WITH THEM TO LONDON AND THEREFORE HE WOULD NOT BE AVAILABLE IN ATHENS AGAIN UNTIL THE MIDDLE OR END OF NEXT WEEK. (COMMENT: IF LEDSKY DOES INDEED GO TO LONDON, I RECOMMEND HE

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BE PREPARED TO SEEK TZOUNIS OUT AND DISCUSS THIS SUBJECT FURTHER WITH HIM THERE, SENDING US A REPORT AND ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE AS TO HOW WE SHOULD PROCEED IN ATHENS.) IN ANSWERING HIS INQUIRY, I TOLD BITSIOS WE WERE PREPARED TO KEEP OUR EXPERTS, WHO HAD ALREADY BEEN IN ATHENS FOR MORE THAN THREE WEEKS, ANOTHER WEEK OR SO AS LONG AS WORTHWHILE PROGRESS WAS BEING MADE.

5. OTHER: IN PASSING, I MENTIONED MY UNDERSTANDING THAT EX-KING CONSTANTINE AND HIS FAMILY WERE EXPECTED TO FLY TO THE UNITED STATES TODAY ON A WEEK'S VISIT AS PRIVATE CITIZENS AND TOURISTS. AS FAR AS I KNEW, THEY WOULD NOT BE EXPECTED TO GO TO WASHINGTON NOR WAS I AWARE OF ANY POSSIBLE CONTACT BETWEEN CONSTANTINE AND ANY US OFFICIALS. HAVING IN MIND MY LATE, PRIVATE DINNER LAST NIGHT WITH FORMER PRIME MINISTER KANNELLOPOULOS AND OPPOSITION LEADER MAVROS, I ALSO MENTIONED -- WITHOUT GIVING ANY DETAILS-- THAT I CONTINUED, IN THE COURSE OF MY NORMAL DUTIES AND

MOVEMENTS IN GREECE, TO HAVE PERIODIC CONTACTS WITH THESE TWO GENTLEMEN AND OTHER PROMINENT POLITICAL LEADERS AND PERSONALITIES NOT ASSOCIATED WITH CARAMANLIS AND THE GOVT. (BITSIOS HAD ON INSTRUCTIONS ADMONISHED SOVIET AMBASSADOR UDALTSOV LAST YEAR FOR IMPROPER INTERFERENCE IN GREEK INTERNAL POLITICAL AFFAIRS.) BITSIOS ACKNOWLEDGED THAT SUCH ACTIVITIES AND CONTACTS WERE ENTIRELY APPROPRIATE INASMUCH AS I WAS NOT ALLOWING MYSELF OR MY POSITION TO BE IMPROPERLY EXPLOITED PUBLICLY (AS UDALTSOV HAD DONE).

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: Z
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PERSONAL OPINION, CONTINENTAL SHELF, AIRSPACE, FOREIGN RELATIONS, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, AEGEAN
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 06-May-1977 12:00:00 am
Decapton Date: 22 May 2009
Decapton Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977ATHENS04219
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770159-1215
Format: TEL
From: ATHENS
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770587/aaaacxdp.tel
Line Count: 127
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 99cc8a99-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 77 ATHENS 4214
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 25-Jan-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2621834
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: BRIEF SUMMARY OF MAY 6 DISCUSSION WITH FORMIN BITSIOS
TAGS: PFOR, GR, US, (BITSIOS, DIMITRIOS), (CAGLAYANGIL, IHSAN)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkvgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/99cc8a99-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009